

PROCESS AND APPARATUS FOR REMOVING A CONTAMINANT FROM A SUBSTRATE

Abstract of Disclosure

Contaminant removal from a substrate can be performed using a supercritical fluid. An apparatus can be configured to operate at conditions that take advantage of higher solubility of a contaminant in its supercritical state compared to its liquid state. The substrate can be exposed to a supercritical fluid in a chamber to remove at least some of the contaminant. Outside the chamber, the supercritical fluid can be cooled to its corresponding liquid state, in which lower solubility of the contaminant may allow the contaminant to separate into a different phase from the liquid phase of the supercritical fluid. Such contaminant removal can be highly advantageous to substrates that withstand only limited amounts of physical or mechanical stress or heat. The contaminant removal can also be used where geometries virtually prevent removal by physical or mechanical means.